A VINDICATION Of the Two LETTRES CONCERNING Alterations in the Liturgy; IN ANSWER TO *VOX CLERI.*

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[by Thomas Long]

By a London Presbyter.

[i.e. W. Bassett]

LONDON,
Printed for *R. Baldwin*, near the *Black Bull* in the *Old-Baily*. M DC XC.

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A VINDICATION OF THE Two Letters TO THE CONVOCATION.

THo' the two Letters concerning the Convocation are sufficient to satisfie any reasonable and unprejudiced Man, that alterations in our Liturgy are not only Lawful, but [in this juncture] expedient too: Yet a late Pamphlet intituled *Vox Cleri*, gives me a just occasion both of confirming what they have said, and also of exposing this Pamphlets little Pleas and Sophistry, against so Wise and Charitable an undertaking.

The very Title, viz. *Vox Cleri*, or, *The Sense of the Clergy*, speaks the Author both weak and peevish; and the Quotation of *Prov.* 24. 21. in the Title page, —*Fear God, and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to Change*, is an argument *ex abundanti* this way.

For what hath this busie Thing to do with the Sense of the Clergy? What Commission hath he to acquaint the World with their Minds? The very thing it self betrays the Author to a just suspicion, as speaking more of Design than Truth,

But what Clergy doth he mean? It must be either the Convocation, or those in his Neighbourhood, *p.* 1. if the former, the thing is false; for he declares in his *Protestation*, that there is nothing yet proposed to them, therefore they have not yet Voted in this matter, whence alone we may conclude their Sense; if the latter, the thing is weak and frivolous, because to these we oppose the *Vote Close, or Sense of the Clergy*, in the City, as well as else where, who must be allowed to be more considerable than those in a Country Neighbourhood; for (to mention no more) these are few, and (as we have reason to believe) prejudiced by Letters misrepresenting the whole Affair. Indeed his Reflections, *p.* 24. say, they have not seen any Pamphlets, or [Printed] Letters against Alterations; but this implies, that they have seen Written ones, else what need of this restriction? In truth this is the *very words* the true cause of our present heats and difficulties, which speaks the Sense of some Men to be more a *Passion* than a *true Judgment*.

As to that Scripture, *Solomon* spoke not in reference to Forms and Ceremonies, which is our Subject, but of substantial Duties to God and the King; which affects this Gentleman more than those whom he opposes, in that he makes it his business, *p.* 2. *&c.* to sham and put tricks upon His Majesty's Commission; therefore his application of it is but an absur'd wresting of the Sacred Text. It is true, it hath been sometimes used this way, from the general force and signification of the Word, which yet speaks more of Phansie than Judgment, but ought not by a formal Quotation, for this imports the sense the Author uses it in, to be the sense of the Holy Pen-man?

According to this the Author must be of no Church in the World; for where is the Holy-Kiss and Love-Feasts? Where are Deaconesses, Exorcisms, with a multitude of Ceremonies in Baptism, as thrice Diping, Anointing, *&c.* Where is the Water mingled with the Sacramental Wine?

Where

Where Kneeling in Prayer all the Week, in token of the Fall by sin; and Standing on Sundays, as well as all that space between *Easter* and *Pentecost*, signifying the Resurrection? Which things we frequently meet with, both in the *Greek* and *Latin* Fathers? Where is the fickleness of the *Greek* Church, which hath altered her Liturgy so often, that a Collection of her several Forms are said by the *Letter to a Friend*, to amount to Twenty Volums? Where is the unchangeableness of the *Latin* Church, which hath often altered her publick Service, notwithstanding her pretences to an Infallibility? Where is the constancy of the Church of *England*, which hath changed not only under Popery, but under *Edw. 6. Q. Eliz.* and *Car. 2.* therefore this Gentleman with vanity enough advises, *not to meddle with them that are given to change*; while he professes himself a Member of that Church that hath changed so often already, and allows of farther changes still.

In the Book it self he saith, *p.* 1. that the Clergy in his Neighbourhood *are inclinable to part with several Ceremonies, and to submit to many Alterations for the peace of the Church, and satisfaction of sober Dissenters.*

Answ. 1. The Author is known to be himself a Member of the Convocation; therefore this Intelligence of the Election of Dr. *Jane*, which he pretends to have received from one of the Convocation, and the great satisfaction, he saith, it gives to the Clergy of those parts, is all but a meer contrivance, and may justly be suspected to have more of a Trick than of Truth in it.

2. Suppose this true; yet what have the Convocation to do with the Sense of this Party, more than of anothers? Why should they regard a little Plat in the Country, more than the Metropolis of this Kingdom? Or why should our Pamphleter think to give the Convocation Laws from those four notions, which himself, and other suggestions have begot in a few of his own Creatures?

They are to consider what is fit to be done, not what a few prejudiced and designing Men would have them do. But,

3. If they are thus inclined, let that inclination appear in those whom they have sent up to this Convocation; else we must take all this but as a fair introduction to a foul design; and indeed his management of this affair gives us a shrewd suspicion of it: For it seems these Gentlemen required two things in order to such condescentions, viz.

1. That Dissenters apply themselvs to the Convocation for Alterations, lest they should reject the kindness with a *Quis requisivit?* p. 2. and

2. That they declare what Alteration will satisfie 'em, p. 3.

To the former of these we Answer,

1. Suppose want of application may be granted to give him a moral assurance (as he saith) that concessions will be despised; yet this affects those as the leading men, who are the usual Addressers, or at most but some others of the Party, not all the People; many of whom we are morally assured stand ready for an accommodation.

2. Alterations are the thing which many of 'em have long Called and Wrote for; it is what they expect from the promise of the Bishops, and acquiescence of the Clergy, whence they now wait for the performance; while many begin to censure and reproach us, since they find a difficulty in it. Therefore there is neither reason nor temper in his insisting still upon applications.

3. Some conceive, that some of their leading Men industriously neglect or refuse such applications, that hereupon by means of our stiffness, as well as otherwise, they may gain more than they believe the Church will give them, and if so, it concerns us in point of Prudence as well as Duty,

Duty, to grant them something, leſt they get what we are unwilling to part from.

4. Some things impoſed are (without all controverſie) an offence to many weak ones; and certainly we ought to remove the ſtumbling-block (ſo far as the ſafety of the Church will permit) tho' they never Petition for the kindneſs, unleſs their neglect of what we think is their Duty, may excuſe our neglect of what we know to be our own. And indeed it is a pretty ſhuffle, that becauſe ſome Men are thought to be ſtiff, therefore the Church owes no regards either to them, or any of their Party, of whom many may be gained, if the fault is not our own.

But in truth all this is only a blind excuſe for not doing what he hath no mind ſhould be done; for the cloſe of this Paragraph ſaith, it is declared in the Preface to the Liturgy, as alſo in the Kings Eccleſiaſtical Commiſſion, that Alterations may be made according to the exigency of times and occaſions; yet he oppoſes another part of the Preface to both, *viz.* That the Book, that is, of Common Prayer, *as it ſtood before Eſtabliſhed by Law, doth not contain in it any thing contrary to the Word of God, or to ſound Doctrin, or which a godly Man may not with a good Conſcience uſe and ſubmit to, or which is not fairly defenſible*—— to which he adds, that it hath been altered for the better *in ſome hundreds of places ſince*, ſuggeſting hereby, that it needs no Alterations now; which gives an undoubted evidence,

1. Of his inconſiſtency with himſelf; for he argues againſt Alterations meerly for want of application from Diſſenters, and yet under the ſame Head changes his Topick, diſputing againſt ſuch Alterations from the perfection of our Liturgy; he would have none, becauſe Diſſenters ask for none, and then becauſe there is need of none: Certainly he ſhifts his Argument, becauſe he ſuſpects that the firſt propoſed will not ſtand the ſhock, and therefore brings us this as a reſerve to ſupport it.

2. This

2. This speaks his ſincerity; for he knows we plead for Alterations from a prudential neceſſity ariſing not ſo much from the Book it ſelf, as from the weakneſs of ſome who miſunderſtand, and the perverſneſs of others who induſtriouſly abuſe it; What need then of juſtifying the Book in this argument, unleſs to amuſe the Reader with an heap of pleas to no purpoſe?

3. This diſcovers his groſſe inadvertency, in that he pleads againſt Alterations, from Diſſenters not asking for them; and yet in the ſame Head declares himſelf abſolutely againſt all Alterations, whether they ask or not, in that he uſes the Kings Commiſſion, and the Preface to the Common Prayer, againſt the deſign of that Commiſſion, and that very Liberty which the Preface it ſelf doth give us; ſo fain would he carry on a deſign which he is aſhamed to own, (*i. e.*) hinder Alteration, and yet lay the fault at the Diſſenters doors.

Whatever is at the bottom, this is generally the humor amongſt Men of this complexion, they wiſh for Peace, but will part with nothing for it; and the Gentlemen in this Authors Neighbourhood, who ſpeak fair but do nothing, are like the diſobedient Son who ſaid, I go, but went not; for which he had (I'le warrant you) as good reaſons as theſe before you.

2. He pleads, *p.* 3. That they ought to declare what Alterations will ſatisfie, elſe they have no reaſon to make any.

Anſw. 1. This ſome of 'em have done already under *Car.* 2. and ſtill do by their frequent complaints, and the reaſons they give of their ſeparation. And the late promiſe of accommodation muſt reſpect the Alteration of thoſe things (ſo far as may be) that offend the more reaſonable and judicious amongſt 'em. Now after all this, for them to make new propoſals, is not only *actum agere*, but a putting

putting their Cause back, which is already known, and hath advanced so far as to have gained the promise of a due consideration. Therefore there is now nothing wanting on our parts in order to their ease and our security, but a performance of that Promise.

2. By this Paragraph he expects, that all parties should agree in their demands; which he knows, and p. 2. acknowledges is impossible, therefore his requiring impossible conditions of peace is no better, than a fallacious denial of that peace it self.

Hence he urges the extravagancy of some men, that have trampled on Condescensions made in the Year 1661. and others proposed by the present Bishop of *Worcester*, in the Year 1681. which he thinks enough to render the Church justly sour and peevish forever.

Answ. 1. He withal acknowledges, that these are but some that rise such heights, and grants us p. 2. that all cannot agree in common Proposals, which utterly destroys his argument; for as some will not, so the very Differences amongst themselves do assure us, that others will accept reasonable Condescensions, and the gaining a part is not only all we expect, but is sufficient to our end too.

2. These few he quotes, by such unreasonable slights must be presumed to design the obstructing all future Alterations, as knowing, that this is the ready way to break their Parties. Therefore our Pamphlet not only trifles, but also gratifies those few hot and designing men, who intend not an accommodation, but the maintaining of a Faction.

But p. 4. drives on the same argument, quoting a Book of Mr. *R. B.*, which saith, *There are Forty sinful particulars in our Communion, besides Thirty tremendous Principles and Circumstantials, which affright Dissenters from it*; and *the healing*

attempt

attempt requires not such abatements, as Authority now designs; but the *admission of their new Model for a Comprehension which is such, as will make every Parish Church independent*; All which things, p. 3. assure us, that the Convocation neither can nor will alter, and yet if any one remain unaltered, the Schism will continue. Whence he asks *Cui bono? To what end should any Alterations be made?* To which (he thinks) a satisfactory Answer cannot be given.

But this is an argument of the weakness of his reasoning, not of the strength of his Cause; for this supposes, that all Dissenters are of the same mind; which is a poor fallacy called *Petitio principii*, a taking that for granted, which he must prove, else his whole cause falls to the ground. To which we Answer,

1. It is well known, that Dissenters under the same denomination are of very different minds, as to the matters of our Church; for some are offended at one thing, some at another, and some at more, which together (they think) give a just cause of Separation. Therefore a few Alterations would leave some no Objection, and others too little (even in their own judgments) to justifie a Schism.

2. This supposes, that Alterations will gain Dissenters only, which we can never grant him; because a great part of this Nation stands more or less doubtful, and indifferent between the Church and the Conventicle, who seeing the peaceable inclination of the Church, manifested by reasonable Condescensions, will unite with her, and become her supports; who else (upon our stiffness) may joyn with Dissenters, and together may find hands to pull her down. Therefore we have reason and motives enough in this undertaking, tho' we were infallibly certain, that not one Dissenter would be gained by it.

This

This is so obvious, that he immediately starts an Objection, which he sees will be certainly made against him, *viz.* that *Alterations may please the King, the Parliament, and a great part of the Dissenting Laity*, by which we must understand all those that are not in Communion with the Church.

In Answer to which, he Complements the King, Lashes the Parliament, and (like a Law-giver) proposes other measures towards the Laity; industriously evading that part of the Objection which he dare not undertake to Answer. But leaving this a while, we will pursue the present argument.

In this Case we are to consider, not what every Dissenter would have, which is the way to hinder all Alterations, or to leave our selves nothing; but what Alterations will take away the greatest occasions of mistake and cavil, as knowing, that this will reduce some and leave others inexcusable.

This was the method of the Church before; for the Preface to the Common Prayer saith, that tho' *there were proposals made, yet our aim was not to gratifie this or that Party in any their unreasonable demands; but to do that, which to our best understanding we conceive might most tend to the preservation of Peace, and Unity in the Church*, &c. And certainly the Church may Alter things now without any fresh Proposals made, much better than she could then without having any regards to them that were made; because,

1. Those Proposals then made, together with Complaints, Demands, and other Methods since, do give us a better understanding of Dissenters, than those Proposals could give then; therefore (without any Proposals now made) we have less need of being informed what will satisfie Dissenters, than the Church had then even after their Proposals were received.

1. Alterations then without regard to their Propofals might exasperate some, who might think themselves neglected, but Alterations now without fresh Propofals cannot exasperate any, but may oblige the more, as being evidences of a free inclination to Peace and Unity. Therefore if those methods gain'd some, these are likely to gain more. But

2. Suppose they do not recover one Dissenter, yet (as we said) it is not to be imagined, but that they will fix many of the unsetled Multitude, who added to the Church, will leave Dissenters the objects of our Pity, not of our Fear. This must be granted, and consequently his principal argument against Alterations, *viz.* the improbability of gaining Dissenters is utterly overthrown.

But our Author, *p.* 5, 6. leaves his Usurped Province, for instead of giving reasons against Alterations designed for winning Dissenters, he is for reducing them by force; which methods (he saith) had left *in some great Cities scarce three or four Persons of any note, that kept off from our Communion, till Toleration disordered all again.*

This very Plea doth farther evidence, not only the great presumption of the Man, who prescribes to all Authority, but of the great necessity of present Alterations too, because

1. A Toleration had not unsetled so many, had not the strict terms of Communion made them so uneasie: therefore there seems to be (in our present circumstances) an absolute necessity of present abatements, that we may reduce those we have lost, and keep them we yet have.

2. Suppose, that nothing but a Toleration makes Alterations now necessary, yet if Authority thinks fit to put such a necessity upon us, we ought in prudence and duty both, to apply our selves to that [perhaps] only expedient, which is now left us, whereby to preserve our Church and People. If a Toleration made it lately necessary in the judgment of all

all our Clergy, to promise Conformities, why should not a Toleration now render it full as necessary to make them? The truth is, this Gentleman is of the same mind with the Book lately quoted, which is not for parting a Stake, but for having all or none; and were all Church-men on one hand, and all Dissenters on the other, of the same humor, we should find the whole Nation as mad as the *Psalmists* furiosi, who when any spoke of Peace, were making ready for Battle.

He grants, *p. 6.* that they know not what the Commissioners have done in order to an Alteration; and yet at the same time pleads, that *the Alterations, which are said to be prepared, will hazard the offending a greater number, than they are likely to gratifie.*

Answ. This is the same injustice, which the Authors protestation complains of, *viz.* That they were Condemned unheard; he censures the thing, and determins the consequences, and yet confesses that he knows nothing of the matter, only as People say, who know as little as himself. This we may presume is the effect of those Letters, which were sent abroad to prepossess and prejudice the Country-Clergy.

And indeed it is evil Surmises and wicked Representations of what men know not, that is the cause of most of our Heats and Mischiefs. I know, that some hottest opposers of Alterations, have submitted to the particulars prepared (when laid before 'em) as very reasonable; tho' they have represented the whole, (unknown) as Monstrous Innovations. And were they made publick, I doubt not, but they would shame these opprobrious Scandals cast upon the Commissioners, and themselves. But in the mean time, we must expect a great deal of candour in this harangue, when the Author is so notoriously guilty himself, of what he thinks all his Art and Passion, little enough to expose in others.

In the same Page it is Objected, That Alterations will leave incorrigible Dissenters the more inexcusable; which he denies, saying, they will still plead Conscience, and under every Penalty still cry out of Persecution.

Answ. They may do so if they will; but yet these Pretences and Clamours will have so little colour of Reason and Justice, that they will neither gain them new Proselites, nor keep all their old ones; for which reason, incorrigible Dissenters are as much against Alteration, as our Author; they are in the same cause, tho' aiming at different ends; and whether he or they are like (in our circumstances) to be the gainer, let the World judge.

In *p.* 7. He wheedles with Dr. *Beveridge's* Sermon before the Convocation, and by breaking it into bits and shreds, would make it speak contrary both to the Letter and design of it. He here quotes *p.* 25. that *a part should not be preferred before the whole.* Whence he opens against the Schism, and would have *Dissenters by strict discipline, taught the Duty of Self-denial.* But what is this to the Doctors design, or our business?

His design there is to shew, that there are a weak sort of Dissenters, in reference to whom the Church ought to make such provision, that *she may keep those members she hath, and reduce those she wants*;—— that however, nothing *ought to be omitted for the sake of these, that may be profitable to the whole Church; nor admitted, that may be detrimental to it.* Because *a part ought not to be preferred before the whole.* Where the Pamphlet, out of either ignorance or design, takes that absolutely, which is spoke only *Secundum quid*; quoting the Doctor against all Alterations, when he first allows some, and then is against none but such that may be of publick mischief.

And what is this to our business, who are not to give Laws and inflict Penalties on Dissenters, but are only to consider

consider what prudent Alterations may possibly win them, and give the Church safety, but not danger?

The Sermon, p. 26. saith, that Alterations should not be made without a cogent *necessity*, and p. 27. *utrum autem ecclesia nostra — but whether our Church be constrained by such a necessity, is not my part to determine*; where the Doctor is not against Alterations, as the Pamphlet vainly insinuates, but modestly refuses directly to anticipate the business of a Convocation, which our Pamphleter hath face enough to do. But that he may give us a sufficent proof, not of his impertinency only, but of his want either of Judgment or Honesty too, he proceeds with the Doctors Sermon, till he doth sufficiently lead the Reader to the conclusion of such a necessity, which the Pamphlet it self requires, viz. *This only I dare to affirm, that if it be necessary to reduce wandring Sheep into Christs Flock; if to take off Scruples from the minds of weak Brethren; if to allay hatred, appease anger, and (as much as may be) to suppress all Dissentions concerning Religion — if these things* (saith he) *seem necessary to any man, it will also seem necessary to that man to admit such changes, as he is perswaded will conduce to such ends* — where the Doctor so fairly leads his Reader to the circumstances of our Church, and the designs of calling this Synod; that he leaves him necessarily to conclude that necessity, which himself would not express. This shews both his candour and his Rhetorick; since in a point so nice and yet so important too; here is a *Misosis* more intended, than he thought convenient to speak.

P. 9. Tells us from the Doctor still, that even *incommodious Laws, ought not to be changed without some urgent necessity*. We readily grant it; but the only question between us, *viz.* whether our Church hath at this time such a necessity or not, is as much undetermined, as if he had never made any of these Quotations; whence I cannot see what service he hath done himself, unless to shew the World, that he is able to Translate a piece of a Latin Sermon.

His

His next Peregraph tells us of an apt allusion of the Learned Doctors, but I am sure it is no way apt for his purpose; for the Doctor there shews, "That both the universal and particular Churches, have power by their Synods to make Laws, as they shall judge expedient for the better Administration of the publick Worship of God." But wherein this can serve him who is against all Alterations, I can by no means see. And in truth, were all the parts of his Pamphlet like this, which troubles the Doctors Sermon, and the World to no purpose, I must have spoken him a weak Brother, not fit to be received to doubtful Disputations.

Without peradventure the design of all this pudder is to perswade the World, that the Doctor is like himself, viz. Learned to no purpose, (*i. e.*) hath Preached and Printed a Sermon, that is not to the Point; only because it is more modest than the Pamphlet, which presumes to give peremptory injunctions to the Convocation it self, against whom we have the judgment as of other learned and unprejudiced men, so of the Bishops themselves, who judge it so suitable, that by their Commands we have a Second Impression.

Had he followed our Doctors advice, p. 30. *Nulla præjudicata opinio, nulla præsumpta suspicio, nulla licium cupido, huc afferatur: Let no prepossessions, no presumed suspicions, no desire of contentions approach this Synod*; neither this Pamphlet nor its Author would find any place there.

In p. 10. he starts this Objection, viz. *Our Divisions had almost betrayed us to Popery and Slavery; for prevention of which danger for the future, it is advisable (as much as may be) to enlarge the terms of our Communion.*

An Objection well put, but not so well Answer'd; for he says, *Who betray'd us to those Divisions? Were they not such as causlesly separated from us, and joyn'd with the common Enemy,*

Enemy, rather than with the Church of England? This we would prove as otherwise, so from their addresses to the late King; which promisd to stand *by him with their lives and fortunes, and to obey him without reserve.*

Answ. Whatever some might do, yet it is well known, that many leading and prudent Men (especially amongst their Laity) stood off, and were so far from serving the Cause, that they dreaded the consequence; and did judge the Imprisonment of the Bishops the common danger of the whole Protestant interest; nor was the Church ever better esteem'd by the main body of Dissenters, than when under those Tryals. And indeed the advantages that Popery reaps from our Divisions, arise not so much from the design of Dividers, as from the nature and necessary consequences of Division it self.

2. How well those that did Address performd their Promises, let the World judge.

3. Suppose what he asserts; yet the very Allegation speaks the necessity of Alterations, that hereby we may lessen the number of those, who else may endanger us again. Our Circumstances are not yet so Altered, but that their Uniting against the Church of *England*, may expose us to those dangers now, as much as it did then; and therefore there is at this time as well a necessity of performing the Bishops Promise, as there was then of making it; but we acquiesc'd in that, and consequently we ought in this.

Our Saviour says, *That a Kingdom divided cannot Stand*; yet our Pamphlet would continue our Division in order [forsooth] to our preservation. And certainly if ever there was a time that speaks this Truth; if ever a time that requires our Union in order to a common Preservation; if ever a time that calls for mutual Condescensions, which is the only way to this Union, it is this.

In

In truth, was the Author a profess'd enemy to our Church and Establish'd Religion, I should believe there is more of Judgment and sincerity in his Answer to this Objection, than I can yet discern in it; for his Argument lies thus: *viz.* Dissenters by their Division have already endangered us; *Ergo*, we should leave them Dissenters still, that they may endanger us again; as if he wisely design'd to punish their Obstinacy by our own Ruin.

But he proceeds, if *some leading Presbyterians are by our Alterations let into the Church, and be made Bishops, Deans, Arch-Deacons, &c. what security have we that they will not promote Divisions in the Church?*—— This was the reason, says p. 11. that the *Clergy opposed a Bill for Comprehension, contriv'd by Bishop* Wilkins; and for which, and other Reasons, the House of Commons cast it out.

Answ. 1. He supposes what he can never prove, *viz.* That such Comprehensions would have made a Division in the Church; therefore this being a mere surmise, must not be allow'd the repute of an Argument.

2. The Security he demands, would have been their Preferments, which would have made it their interest to support, as much as they now think it their interest to pull us down; and likewise their Oaths and Penalty of the Laws, which would chastise every Deviation from their Rule.

But however, to give strength and colour to this suspition, he says, p. 10. *That some Bishops and others, preferred under King* Charles *the Second, did attempt this.*

To which we Answer;

1. What he calls Division, was only a Comprehension design'd by those, whose Judgment as well as Moderation, we have lately had just cause to admire. Such a Division we have in the Church at present, and ever shall have

have, so long as there be moderate and judicious men in it; and had that Comprehension been established, it would have prov'd our security at this very day.

2. Call it a Division, yet they did only attempt; but could not effect it; and indeed it is so hard to sway a Constitution, that not only the Nature of the thing, but this Fruitless undertaking too, may justly allay his fears of admitting a few moderate Men into the Church by some reasonable Alterations.

3. In p. 3, 4. he passionately pleads against all Alterations, from the unlikelyhood of gaining one Dissenter, who are so stubborn and unreasonable in the terms they propose for an Accommodation; and yet here he is afraid of such a number coming in, as shall divide and ruin the whole Church; which speaks the Author to pursue an Hypothesis, but not the Truth; and resolv'd by all manner of Pleas agreeing and disagreeing, probable and improbable, true and false, or by any thing else you can imagine, to confound and obstruct intended Condescensions.

4. It seems very marvellous, that these very surmises set on foot by Popish Polititians, purposely to hinder our Union at the restoring our Liturgy, and the later project of Comprehension, should not only be received by some hot men then, but be pleaded at this time of the day; when we have seen the dismal effects of these Policies which have used the Church against Dissenters, and then Dissenters against the Church, in order to the ruin of the whole Protestant interest, and which at this day do give the greatest advantage to French and Popish designs throughout the World. This seems to bode us no good, and looks like a fate upon Men, which makes them not their own Murderers only, but the common Executioners of Protestants and their Religion.

But in the same Page he pleads against Alterations from another Topick, viz. *reasonable Condescensions to one party is likely to encourage unreasonable Solicitations from another.*

Answ. 1. This produced no such effect formerly, Why then should it now? This is the way to prevent what he pretends to fear; for men are now in expectation, and delays may make them clamorous; but a present settlement puts a stop to all future expectations. But if otherwise, yet

2. Such Alterations strengthning the Church will render it more safe for her to reject unreasonable Solicitations hereafter, than to frustrate reasonable expectations at the present: But he adds,

Our frequent changes in some things, may make men question all, and in last center in the Church of Rome.

Answ. 1. Have any, or all former Changes considered together, done so? If they have, produce your instances; if they have not, Why should one Alteration more do it, especially considering, it is well known that our Church has always allow'd such Changes?

2. Was this probable the Popish party would be well-willers to Alterations; whereas they and their confidents are raised in their expectations, from the difficulties that attend this Affair? The matter of Fact is undeniable, therefore they or himself must be in an Error: And if we consider his undertaking and performances, we shall easily believe that he is not Infallible.

Thus you have his Feats; whence in the next Paragraph he Triumphs, reckoning he has knock'd down his Enemies with this Pamphlet, as *Sampson* did the *Philistines*, with the Jaw-bone of an Ass. For thus he proceeds;

And

And now let the men that are given to change, produce those weighty and important reasons required, in the Preface to the Common-Prayer; or that great necessity which Dr. Beveridge *requires for the Alteration, even of commanded Laws.*

A bold Challenge indeed! however I shall accept it; And will shew these important Reasons and great Necessity of present Alterations from,

1. The Sacred Scriptures.
2. Our Circumstances.
3. The general Sense of the Nation.
4. The Duty of doing all we can for the keeping and securing our Flocks. And,
5. Some things themselves imposed.

1. The Sacred Scriptures do determine this controversie against our Pamphlet; for St. *Paul* forbids us to offend a weak Brother, in using our power in things indifferent. This indeed does not affect us as we are now under the Law, but it doth affect the Church, when the civil Authority calls her to Explain, Alter, and Omit those things that do offend. But you will say, that the Church hath power in all matters indifferent, whence results the Duty of the Peoples Submission in all such matters: It is true, but if the People cannot see the Lawfulness of such Submission, the Church ought not to press them any further, than a due regard to the Souls of Men will allow, or the general Interest of Religion, and the common safety of the Church doth require, 1 *Corinth.* 10. 3. We must not do all things that are Lawful, but what things are *expedient* and *edifying*; upon which Scripture *Clem. Alex.* Pædag. b. 2. c. 1. hath this Note, Ταχὺ γὰρ ποιήσουσιν ὁπόσα δεῖ τὸ μὴ ἔξον, ὁ, πάντα δεῖν ποιεῖν ἔξον, *Those who will do all that is Lawful,*

quickly fall into that which is Unlawful; and I am ſure it is no Paradox, that if the Church will do all ſhe may, ſhe certainly doth more than ſhe ought, becauſe her power muſt be tempered by a tender and prudential regard to the weakneſs of all her Members. St. *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 10. 8. ſpeaks of a power that God hath given *for edification*, not *for deſtruction*; therefore that Church doth abuſe her power, which by too ſtrict terms of Communion doth not gather and build up, but ſcatter the Flock. Indeed at our laſt ſettlement the evils we have ſuffered, were not ſufficiently foreſeen; but ſince ſad experience hath given us ſuch terrible admonitions, the Church ſeems utterly inexcuſable, if ſhe refuſe (to the beſt of her skill and power) to apply a ſuitable remedy.

2. That a Kingdom divided cannot ſtand, is a Truth ſo certain, and allowed by all obſerving Men, that our Saviour brought this as a Medium to prove, that a Diviſion will ruine even Satan himſelf; and what our Diviſions have done this way by obſtructing all publick undertakings, and expoſing us to hazards both at home and abroad, I leave the World to judge; nor can we think of any other expedient to ſecure us, but Union; nor is there any way to Union, but mutual condeſcenſions; nor muſt we expect (as long experience hath taught us) that if we ſtiffly ſtand our ground, others will move, unleſs perhaps to confound and ruin us; therefore if it be neceſſary to put life into the affairs of Church and State; if neceſſary to ſecure to our ſelves Peace and Proſpetity, it is then neceſſary to make thoſe Condeſcenſions, which ſeem now the only means to that end.

3. This is evident from the general ſenſe of all Parties in the Nation, who look upon Alterations as the only Methods of Union, which may be proved by an induction of particulars. Thoſe who are for Union and Settlement, are for Alterations, others are againſt them. Moderate Presbyterians, and the Unſettled multitude, expect Alterations,

rations, as incouraging motives to the Church: Rigid Diſſenters, who reſolve at any rate to maintain their Schiſm, diligently endeavour (as we hear from *Eſſex* and the *Weſt*) by all imaginable Methods to ſecure their People from a compliance, what Alterations ſoever the Church may make; which abundantly ſatisfies us, that they fear Alterations will endanger their Parties. Inferiour Sects, whoſe Principles are inconſiſtent with Government, are againſt theſe things, leſt hereby the Church ſhould become ſtrong enough to quaſh them at her pleaſure. While the Papiſts abhor theſe Methods, as knowing they will obſtruct all their deſigns, and ſuffer them no longer to uſe Proteſtants as Tools in the ruining one another. Now after all this, what is the true reaſon, that this Gentleman, with thoſe in his Neighbourhood, and others under the ſame prejudices, ſhould oppoſe theſe undertakings? If becauſe they fear that Diſſenters will not be gained, or the Church be ruined by it; we have the Senſe of the whole Nation, both Friends and Enemies againſt them; but if for other Reaſons, let them look to it, who muſt ſeverely anſwer for their obſtructing the moſt probable Methods of Peace and Unity. Therefore if Peace and Unity, and the common Intereſt both of Church and State, be of any neceſſity and importance with us; then in the judgment of the Nation, Alterations muſt be of ſome neceſſity and importance too, becauſe they judge theſe the moſt conducive to thoſe ends.

4. We argue from the indiſpenſible Duty of doing all we may to ſecure our Flocks in the ways of Truth and Peace, which lies ſo hard upon us, that their Blood will be required at the hands of thoſe Shepherds, who ſuffer them to periſh out of negligence, humor, or any other means whatſoever: And certainly few can be ſo much ſtrangers at home, as not to obſerve, that they daily loſe ſome and find others unſetling, and perceive thoſe growing incroachments upon our ſeveral changes, which will quickly haſten things to a confuſion; and that eſpeci-

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ally since the present stiffness against Alterations. And tho' I do not Damn those that leave us, yet Schism is very dangerous; and unsetling turns many to loosness and irreligion, and occasions some to fix in Opinions that are in themselves Damnable; which ought to be well considered by them who have read Jer. 23. 1. *Wo to the Pastors that destroy and scatter the Sheep of my Pasture, saith the Lord.* I know that Separation is but an accidental consequence, proceeding not from the Nature of our Constitution, but from the Weakness and Prejudices of Men; yet when experience doth teach us such an accidental evil, and the Church is called to provide (so far as may be) a suitable remedy, I must place those that oppose this design amongst such Shepherds, that destroy and scatter the Sheep; for by such refusal they make the cause of Separation to be not only the others weakness, but their own wilfulness too; in that, as the one will not understand, so the other will not remove, (so far as they may) the occasion of error.

Therefore as Dr. *Beveridge* saith, *if it be necessary to reduce wandring Sheep into Christs flock; if necessary to take off scruples from the minds of weak Brethren; — if necessary to suppress all dissentions concerning Religion* — if necessary to keep those we have, and to give up our accounts with joy at the last day; it must be *necessary to admit such changes, as are conducive to such ends.*

5. We argue from things imposed. As

1. Apocryphal Lessons, which ought in reason and prudence to be changed for Canonical Scriptures; because these containing some things unseemly, some improbable, and others evidently false, do scandalize not only them without the Church, but many of those who are frequenters of our daily Prayers.

His Answer to a Letter from a Minister in the Country brings several Pleas from others against Alterations in this

this particular, *p.* 25. these are read not *to confirm our Faith, but to reform our manners*; this may be better applied to *Ecclesiasticus*, and the *Book of Wisdom*, than to *Tobit*, *Judith*, and *Bell and the Dragon*, which looking like Legends and Romances, seem very unapt this way. But however why should not they that offend, and respect Manners only, give place to those Scriptures that do not offend, and respect both Faith and Manners too, unless men fear that they should do too much good at once? He pleads the ancient use of them from *Cypr. in Symb.* which is it self an Apocryphal Book, and not so old as the pretended Author by about One hundred and fifty years, and is ascribed by some to St. *Hierom*, by others to *Rufinus*; but however, we are to enquire not what is oldest, but what is most edifying; indeed they might anciently be of good use, but not now, since squeamish and critical times are so much prejudiced against them; whence according to the Preface to the Common Prayer, it is but reasonable they should be changed according to the present exigence.

Omitting other things, *p.* 26. pleads for 'em from the Dissenters, who have declared, that they are not against Apocryphal Chapters, being read in the Church, but against their being read as Lessons; but our Liturgy doth order them as Lessons, therefore this Quotation shews, that they require an Alteration, if not of the Chapters, yet of the manner of reading 'em. Where our Pamphleter shews himself such a Master of Defence, that instead of hitting of his Enemy, he either beats the Air, or wounds himself with his own Weapon.

Some Nonconformists give this as a great Reason of their Dissent, that they cannot be satisfied, but that the *Assent* and *Consent* required by the Act of Uniformity, doth reach not only the Use but the Truth of these Books. Many of our own Church are offended, some persons unsetled, and others fixed in their Separation

ration by reaſon of theſe Leſſons. He pleads, *p.* 27. that ſome Sermons have done more miſchief than *Bel and the Dragon*, *with Tobit and his Dog*; ſuppoſe that, yet why ſhould theſe do any, unleſs we think it a ſufficient diſcharge of our Duties only to do leſs evil than others? I muſt think theſe and all other Pleas this way, highly unreaſonable, unleſs they can prove, that there is worth and weight enough in theſe Books, beyond what there is in Canonical Scripture, to compenſate all theſe miſchiefs, which the Church continually ſuffers upon their accounts, as well as otherwiſe; which (I preſume) the Pamphleter himſelf will hardly undertake.

2. There are ſome paſſages in our Liturgy that may be ſo Altered, as to take away many Objections, which weakneſs hath raiſed and malice improved to a mighty height; I need not mention them, becauſe the Letter from a Miniſter in the Country, hath already done it; in Anſwer to which, our Pamphleter, *p.* 38. by certain explications ſhews, that they are capable of a very fair conſtruction; but who denies this? The Preface to the Common Prayer doth affirm, and our Conformity doth ſpeak it; but the Queſtion is, Whether it is not expedient ſo to expreſs them, that Weakneſs may not ſtumble nor Malice cavil at 'em? Our Pamphlet it ſelf (to clear them from objections) doth explain them; a good argument, that they are not (as he pretends, *p.* 41.) *ſelf-evident*, but that they want an explication; that is indeed an Alteration. And if the Pamphlet may explain them, Why may not the Convocation? Unleſs our Pamphleter be ſo vain as to think his explication muſt go along with the Liturgy, that they may ſee the one who are offended at the other. I muſt declare it an extream dotage upon Forms and modes of Speech, which inclines men to keep in things with ſo much difficulty and damage, that may be ſo eaſily and advantagiouſly parted from.

It

it is not for me to instance in all things that may be to any good purpose Altered; this is the business of a Convocation, and is made (in some part) the Province of the Minister in the Country, who (I doubt not) will support his Letter against the Attacks of this Pamphlet; yet however I shall add some few things not yet in Controversie, which seem of moment enough to become the care of a Convocation, and they are one Rubrick, and one of our Creeds.

The Rubrick is that after the second Hymn in the Morning-Service, and runs thus, *Then shall be sung or said the Apostles Creed* —— *excepting only such days as the Creed of St. Athanasius is appointed.* Where I shall prove that it is not a meer notion, but of a mighty concern to Alter it thus, *viz. The Creed commonly called the Apostles*, and so of the other.

As to the former, I grant there was some Creed very early in the Church, as appears from *Iren. l.* 1. *c.* 2. and *c.* 19. where it is called *REGULA VERITATIS*; and from *Tertull. de Virgin. Veland. c.* 1. where it is *REGULA FIDEI*, which *Novatian. de Trin.* explains by *Symbolum*; and again, *de Præscript. Hær. c.* 13. 14. and from the Constitutions ascribed to *Clem. l.* 7. *c.* 42. But I deny that any of these were that we call the Apostles. Because

1. These Creeds differ one from another, as being not the same, but divers; nor do any one of them agree with this, unless in some main Articles of Faith, as all Confessions must do; which speaks them only to be Creeds, but not the same.

2. *Tertull. ad Prax. c.* 2. Speaking of the Mission of the Holy Ghost, saith, *Hanc regulam ab initio Evangelii decucurrisse* —— which Rule must be understood either of the Sacred Scriptures, or of some common Creed;

if the Latter, it must be another, not this called the Apostles, because this speaks of no such Mission at all.

As we cannot yet meet with this Creed; so it is highly unreasonable to suppose, that the Apostles ever composed any such thing: Because,

1. It is not mentioned in the History of the Acts, which yet gives an account of a Council Convened, and Canons made about things indifferent; and therefore certainly would not have omitted a Rule of Faith. *Baronius* boldly saith, It was made before the Dispersion from *Jerusalem*; but it is unworthy so great a Man to fix the circumstance of Time, but not prove the thing it self.

2. Had this always passed for the Apostles, since it doth not intimate the Divinity of the Son, nor of the Holy Ghost, it is not to be supposed, but that

1. *Simon Magus, Cleobius, Menander, Cerinthus, &c.* who denied Christs Divinity, would have pleaded, that this Doctrin of theirs was no way contrary to the Apostolical Faith.

2. The *Arians*. And

3. The *Macedonians*, who deny the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, would have done the like.

But we find no such Plea from those First Hereticks; nor from the *Arians*, either before, at the *Nicene* Council, or in their Synods under *Constantius*; nor from the *Macedonians*, either Separately, or Convened under the same Emperor: *Ergo*, we must conclude there was no such thing at all; for can any in their Wits imagin, that they who rejected, Τὸ ἐκ πατρὸς, and Τὸ ὁμοούσιον, because these terms are not in the Scriptures,

would

would not have rejected them alſo, becauſe not found in that Rule of Faith delivered by the Apoſtles, if any ſuch had been? Can any imagine, that they would not have endeavoured to have kept this as a ſtanding Rule of Faith, excluſive of any that might deſtroy thoſe darling notions, which this leaves undiſturbed? Can any think that when the Fathers under *Conſtantius* pleaded, that they could not Alter the Creed of *Nice*, that the *Arians* would not have replied, neither can you add to that of the Apoſtles?

3. St. *Hilary Pict. Epiſc. lib. de Synod.* gives us thoſe Confeſſions of Faith, he had then, *viz.* about the middle of the Fourth Century met with, but never mentions this.

4. We never meet with it, either Name or Thing, till *Ruffinus* and St. *Auguſt.* both within the Fifth Century. Nay

5. *Arius* himſelf in *Epiphan. Adv. Her. l.* 2. *Tom.* 2. *Her.* 69. *Num.* 7. juſtifies his Doctrin, in that it was not contradictory to that Creed there laid down, which he had received from his Anceſtors, and from *Alexander* Biſhop of *Alexandria*; and can we think he would not much rather have pleaded, that his Doctrin was not contradictory to the Apoſtolick Creed, had they then known or believed any ſuch thing? Which things together are to me as cogent as a demonſtration, that the World then knew no Creed under the Apoſtles Name.

It was indeed after ſome Ages aſcribed to the Apoſtles, as many things were, whoſe Authors and Origin were not known; and likewiſe becauſe what it doth contain is agreeable to the Apoſtles Doctrin; ſo *Epiphan. Tom.* 2. *Ancorat. Num.* 120. ſaith of the *Nicene* Creed, Αὕτη ἡ πίστις παραδόθη ἀπὸ τῶν ἁγίων ἀποστόλων.

this Faith was delivered to us by the holy Apostles, and was confirmed by above Three hundred and ten Bishops.

Now this Rubrick gives a mighty advantage to the *Socinians*, who plead, that as our Church ascribes this Creed to the Apostles, so it suits none but the *Unitarian Doctrin*, as asserting the Divinity of the Father only; and many of our own Writers affirm, that it contains all the *Credenda* necessary to Salvation, as the Decalogue doth the *Agenda*: Whence it follows, either

1. That the Doctrin of Christs Divinity was not known in the Apostles time: Or,

2. That the Apostles have given us an imperfect Rule of Faith: Or,

3. That the Belief of this Doctrin is not necessary to Salvation.

Whence we must either deny this Creed to be theirs, and thereby set up our private light in opposition to the Church, and thence fall under that lash which we have laid upon Dissenters; or grant, that this Apostolical Rule is wanting in some things necessary to Salvation; or else yield, that this Doctrin (if true) is yet of no such moment. All which absurdities will be avoided only by intituling it the Creed, *Commonly called the Apostles*.

Moreover, it is the observation of the Learned Bishop of *Worcester* in his *Iren.* that Παράδοσις Ἀποστόλων is such a Tradition as came certainly from some Apostle; but Παράδοσις Ἀποστολικὴ is only some antient Tradition, that came from some Apostle or Apostolick Man. And what is true of Παράδοσις may be as true of σύμβολον, and yet in our Copies it is σύμβολον τῶν Ἀποστόλων. So in Dr. *Duports* Version, and in our Rubrick it is the *Apostles*,

Apostles, not the Apostles Creed. Which Observation speaks this Alteration the more necessary, because hereby we seem to speak it not an antient Creed collected out of the Apostles Writings, but a Creed composed by the Apostles themselves.

Therefore if the honor and judgment of our Church, if the checking a growing Heresie, which hath lately gained ground by this very Plea, is worth the care of a Convocation, then it must be worth their care to make this Alteration, because this one particular doth wound the Church, and advance an Heresie at once.

2. *The Creed of St.* Athanasius.

This is indeed amongst his works; but our Dr. *Cave*, who is so curiously skilled in these monuments of antient Learning, speaks it suppositious. *Du Pin* saith, that some ascribe it to one, some to another, but *Tout le monde convient qu'il n'est point de ce Pere*; all Mankind agree, that it is none of that Fathers. St. *Hilary* before quoted, who was the great Champion against *Arianism* in the Latin Church, as *Athanasius* was in the Greek, tho' he gives us other Creeds touching this Controversie, yet never mentions this, nor do we any where find it for a long time after *Athanasius*.

Indeed; *Bellar. de Script. Eccles.* saith, that St. *August. Tract.* in *Psal.* 120. hath these words, viz. *Filius Dei a Patre solo est, non factus, nec creatus, sed genitus.* Whence he concludes, that St. *Augustin* must have seen this Creed; and *Labbey* is pleased very much to follow him. But these words are not to be found together in St. *Augustin*, and those parts he hath are no more than what we find in the genuine works of *Athanasius*, as in his Epistles *ad Serap.* from whence St. *Augustin* might have what we find in him, as well as out of this Creed, had it been then in being, *Ergo*: there is no weight or proof

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in what *Bellarmine* and *Labbey* say upon this Argument.

Voſſius ſaith, It did not appear in the World till about the Year One thouſand, above Three hundred Years after the Death of *Athanaſius*, and yet was then reckoned the work of an uncertain Author. But *Baronius* hath a trick for this, indeavouring to perſwade that it was a long time loſt. But when ſuch things have happened, we find the names of thoſe Tracts or Fragments of 'em in antient Authors, before they were loſt; as in *Clemens Rom. Iren. Epiſt. &c.* whence the World have known there were ſuch things Wrote, tho' they could not find 'em; but we never meet with the name, or any certain Fragments of this Creed in that Age or the next to it, in which *Athanaſius* did live; therefore what *Baronius* ſaith in this Caſe is but a groundleſs preſumption, and (like that of *Bellarmine* and *Labbey* but now mentioned) proves nothing, unleſs that it is eaſie to confute a Jeſuit.

And certainly by this time it appears highly reaſonable to Alter this Rubrick, eſpecially ſince that before this Creed ſeems doubtful in this matter; whence both Rubricks laid together, ſeems to ſpeak the Church fickle and uncertain in her judgment, and that even in a Caſe too clear to admit a Scruple.

3. As to the Damnatory Sentence in this Creed, this Pamphlet will not have it reſtrained to the Proceſſion of the holy Ghoſt, or to any particular Article, but to reſpect the whole, and conſequently not to affect the Greek Church; this is a point which I will not grant him, nor at preſent deny; becauſe if we ſuppoſe what he ſaith, I have yet enough to my purpoſe, ſince it is generally taken otherwiſe, and many are extreamly ſcandalized at it; therefore it is neceſſary for the Church to omit this Creed, or elſe to Alter or explain this

this ſentence, that ſo Some may not be affrighted from us, and others be enabled to meet together with one mind, as well as in one place.

Since the finiſhing this Piece, there is publiſhed a Book Intituled, *Remarks on Two Letters*; the Author hath too much Reaſon to miſtake the Caſe, and had he as much Sincerity, he would not have Miſrepeſented it: How far he is guilty this way, will appear from this Tract, as well as what hath been already done by another hand.

FINIS.